

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LIMA 05437 301945Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 5437

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PE, SHUM, ELAB

SUBJECT: PERU DISORDERS AND LABOR UNREST - A POLITICAL TEST

REF: LIMA 5376

SUMMARY: RECENT ANTI-GOVERNMENT DISORDERS AND LABOR UNREST REFLECT GENUINE POPULAR DISCONTENT OFTEN DIRECTED AND CHanneLED BY MARXIST TEACHERS, STUDENT, AND LABOR GROUPS. WHILE FAR-LEFT ORGANIZATIONS MAY HOPE FOR SUFFICIENT UNREST DIRECTLY TO CHALLENGE THE GOVERNMENT, MOSCOW-LINE LABOR UNIONS SEEM ENGAGED IN A MORE LIMITED PROBE FOR GOP POLITICAL WEAKNESS LEADING TO MODIFICATION OF LABOR AND ECONOMIC POLICIES. SPECIFIC STRIKES, LIKE THAT AT THE SOUTHERN PERU COPPER CORPORATION TOQUEPALA MINE, MAY PROVIDE A TEST OF GOP METTLE. END SUMMARY.

1. RECENT DISORDERS (WHICH CONTINUE TO BREAK OUT -- MOST RECENTLY JUNE 27 IN THE NORTHERN TOWN OF CAJAMARCA) AND LABOR STRIFE MANIFEST GENUINE POPULAR DISCONTENT WITH A STIFF GOP AUSTERITY PROGRAM AS WELL AS A LEFTIST EFFORT TO CAPITALIZE ON
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 LIMA 05437 301945Z

THE SITUATION. DESTRUCTION OF THE UNPOPULAR SOCIAL MOBILIZATION AGENCY (SINAMOS) OFFICE AND THOSE OF OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN SEVERAL CITIES (REFTel) INDICATES A POLITICAL FOCUS TO DEMONSTRATIONS. STREET VIOLENCE WAS LARGELY STUDENT-LED WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF MARXIST TEACHER AND LABOR LEADERS. STUDENTS HAVE BEEN IN THE FOREFRONT OF ANTI-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATIONS OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, AND THE STATE

OF EMERGENCY NOW IN EFFECT WAS PROCLAIMED IN JULY 1976 IN THE WAKE OF STUDENT DISTURBANCES. BOTH SECONDARY AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ARE OFTEN ORGANIZED AND RADICALIZED BY THEIR TEACHERS, AND LIKE THEM FACE A FUTURE OF LIMITED OPPORTUNITY.

2. THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF PERU'S TEACHERS ARE AFFILIATED WITH THE FAR-LEFT TEACHERS UNION, SUTEP. TEACHERS ARE LOW PAID (LESS THAN MINERS, FOR EXAMPLE) AND MANY ARE EMBITTERED BY THEIR ECONOMIC STATUS, NOT COMMENSURATE WITH THEIR EDUCATION OR ASPIRATIONS. MANY ARE APOLITICAL OR APRISTAS, BUT EVEN THEY HAVE FOLLOWED SUTEP LEADERSHIP FOR ITS COMBATIVENESS IN LABOR MANAGEMENT RELATIONS. A TEST OF THE TEACHERS' WILLINGNESS TO FOLLOW THEIR LEADERS IN A CLEARLY POLITICAL ACTION WILL BE ADHERENCE TO THE JULY 5 SUTEP STRIKE CALL (REFTTEL).

3. THAT UNREST OCCURRED THROUGHOUT THE SOUTH, AND ESPECIALLY ALONG THE AREQUIPA-PUNO-CUZO RAIL LINE, SEEMS TO INDICATE SOME COORDINATION AMONG GROUPS OF DIFFERENT POLITICAL PERUSUASIONS. GOP OFFICIALS ARE CONVINCED THAT THE MOSCOW-LINE COMMUNIST PARTY (PCP) IS BEHIND THIS COORDINATION. HOWEVER, FAR-LEFT STUDENT GROUPS ARE POORLY DISCIPLINED AND SOMETIMES GENUINELY ANTI-PCP, AND NOT LIKELY TO RESPOND TO PARTY SIGNALS. THEY ETERNALLY HOPE TO STRIKE THE SPARK WHICH WILL COMBUST INTO A POPULAR UPRISING AND DIRECT CHALLENGE TO THE POLITICAL SYSTEM. ORGANIZED FAR-LEFT TEACHER, LABOR, AND POLITICAL GROUPS ALSO REJECT PCP DIRECTION AND ITS MORE MODERATE POLITICAL STANCE. CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LIMA 05437 301945Z

THEY HAVE CONSISTENTLY ADVOCATED DIRECT ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTION DURING BOTH THE FIRST AND SECOND PHASES OF THE REVOLUTION, WHILE THE PCP POLITICALLY SUPPORTED THE MILGOV UNTIL RECENTLY.

4. THE PCP AND ITS LABOR ARM, THE CGTP WORKERS CONFEDERATION, PROBABLY HAVE A MORE LIMITED INTENT -- TO COORDINATE LOCAL STRIKES AS FAR AS POSSIBLE WITH STUDENT AND POPULAR OUTBURSTS (AREQUIPA, CUZCO, AND PUNO ARE EXAMPLES) IN ORDER TO PROBE GOP POLITICAL WEAKNESSES AND FORCE SOME MODIFICATION OF POLICY. CGTP TACTICS INCLUDE DEFENSE OF LOCAL UNIONS WHICH MAY IN FACT BE MORE MILITANT THAN THE CGTP AND DEMAND ITS BACKING. AT THE SAME TIME, THE CGTP STILL DEMONSTRATES A WILLINGNESS TO "DIALOGUE" WITH THE GOVERNMENT. IN AREQUIPA THE CGTP DEPARTMENT FEDERATION HAS APPARENTLY PROMISED ARMY REGIONAL COMMANDER SANCHEZ SEVERAL TIMES THAT STRIKES WOULD END. YET, "WILDCAT" WORK STOPPAGES CONTINUE.

5. AS THE PREVIOUSLY COOPERATIVE PCP/GOP RELATIONSHIP SUFFERS, FAR LEFT AND MOSCOW-LINE LABOR POLICIES TEND TO CONVERGE IN OPEN OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT. THE FAR-LEFT UNION AT THE SOUTHERN PERU COPPER CORPORATION'S TOQUEPALA MINE STRUCK JUNE 25. THAT WORK STOPPAGE SUBSEQUENTLY EXTENDED TO THE SPCC

ILO INSTALLATIONS. UNION DEMANDS ARE POLITICAL AND SIMILAR TO CGTP DEMANDS ELSEWHERE -- ROLL-BACK OF FOOD AND GASOLINE PRICES, RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, (AND SPECIFICALLY TOQUEPALA UNION LEADER VICTOR CUADROS) ETC. THE TOQUEPALA STRIKE APPEARS TO BE A CAREFUL TEST OF GOP WILL AND A WARNING THAT ALL MARXIST LABOR GROUPS ARE CHALLENGING "ANTI-LABOR" MEASURES.

6. THE GOP HAS HANDLED MOST DISTURBANCES FIRMLY BUT WITHOUT APPARENT OER-REACTION. IT HAS BEEN LESS DECISIVE IN DEALING WITH RECENT STRIKES AND THE TOQUEPALA STRIKE, IF NOT SETTLED QUICKLY, (TOQUEPALA, BUT NOT ILO UNION, SUSPENDED STRIKE JUNE 30 FOR 6 DAYS) WILL SURELY TEST GOP METTLE. WHATEVER THE OUTCOME OF THE PRESENT ROUND OF LABOR UNREST, WHICH HAS NOT YET

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 LIMA 05437 301945Z

EXTENDED TO LIMA, (BUT MAY JULY 5 AS OTHER UNIONS THREATEN TO JOIN SUTEP IN STRIKE) GOP OFFICIALS TELL THE EMBASSY THAT THE "COORDINATED" STRIKES PROVIDE CONVINCING EVIDENCE THAT THE PREVIOUS SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MARXIST ORGANIZATIONS AND THE MILITARY REGIME IS NO LONGER POLITICALLY POSSIBLE. THIS MAY REDOUND TO THE BENEFIT OF TRADITIONAL DEMOCRATIC LABOR AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS.

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